Mechanical Memories Magazine

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The only UK magazine dedicated to Vintage Penny Slot Machines

Mechanical Memories Magazine

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Editorial

Hello again, and welcome to issue 35 of Mechanical Memories Magazine. As I've stated previously, due to other commitments at the moment, it's difficult to be sure when exactly you will receive this. The situation hasn't been helped by Sharron hogging the computer lately, although she does have a legitimate excuse. As some of you will know, Sharron is in her second year as a student nurse, and is bogged down with exams, essays, more exams, and even more essays. Consequently, the magazine has had to take second place. At the time of writing, it is planned to have the magazines in the post by Thursday 21st, but it might not happen! If not, I could be in deep trouble as I shall be open at Brighton during the following week for half term. So if you don't receive this till mid June – sorry!

Now, I have some sad news to report. I have literally just heard that Michael Jordan died recently. The funeral will take place at Margate crematorium on Friday 29th at 2 pm. Michael will not have been known by many readers, as he was not actually a collector as such; he was a retired operator. For more about Michael and my memories of him, I've continued on page 6.

As I've mentioned above, I shall be open at Brighton during the school half term week. If you've never visited Mechanical Memories Museum (or even if you have), it would be good to see you. The arcade is really easy to find, situated at beach level about fifty yards west of the Palace pier (now renamed Brighton pier) – you can't miss it, it's the big long thing that sticks out in the sea!

Till next time

All the best

Jerry

News and Coming Events

New Pinball Museum

I learnt recently that what is thought to be the first UK pinball museum is to open in Ramsgate, Kent. Over thirty machines will be available to play at 'The Pinball Parlour', which will be co-run by Peter Heath and Geoff Harvey. The machines on offer will range from early mechanical examples, through the 'golden' electro-mechanical era, to more up to date electronic machines. All the machines have been adapted to accept special Pinball Parlour tokens. A small café is to be included in the premises, and it is intended that the Pinball Parlour will be available to hire for special events, birthday parties etc. In addition, a hire service will be run from the premises, where individual machines may be hired for parties, corporate events etc.

At the time of writing, I don't have details of opening hours, but I would be surprised if the Pinball Parlour isn't open daily throughout the school half term week. I hope to have more details next month.



Here are the venues Carters will be attending in the coming weeks:

23rd – 25th May, Victoria Park, Tower Hamlets, London E9

30th – 31st May, Park Road Green, Hayes End UB4 8JL

6th – 7th & 13th – 14th June, Bel-Air, Dulwich SE21



Dates for your diary

The Pinball Parlour – official opening 23rd May Addington Street, Ramsgate

Great Dorset Steam Fair 2nd – 6th September Tarrant Hinton, Dorset

Bonhams Mechanical Music & Collectables Sale 29th September Knowle, Nr Coventry

Jukebox Madness 10th & 11th October Kempton Park Racecourse

Bonhams Fine Mechanical Music Sale 10th November Knightsbridge

MMM Vintage Slot Collectors' Show & Auction 29th November Coventry (provisional)

Don't forget – if you know of any event which would be of interest to readers of the magazine, please let me know so that I can include details in these pages.

Michael Jordan

Michael and his family had operated machines for many decades, most notably at Margate's Dreamland. His Grandfather was Arthur Burrows, who had an amusement arcade in Brighton in the 1920s, where he also developed a dealership. Burrows later moved to London, where he formed the Burrows Automatic Supply Co., which acted as agents for many of the larger makers and distributors of coin-operated machines. The business continued until the outbreak of WWII.

I believe Michael ceased operating at Dreamland at the time the park was taken over by the Bembom Brothers in the 1980s. At about the time I first knew Michael, I guess about fifteen years ago, he had recently purchased many of the old machines that were formally sited on the Sun Deck, on Margate's seafront. He operated these and other machines for several years in an arcade adjacent to the Dreamland entrance. Michael later took on an arcade in Herne Bay in the late 1990s, which he ran for a couple of years. By this time, the machines he operated were truly vintage, and included a large number of Aristocrat bandits and some early Cromptons pushers. Sharron and I always made a point of visiting during the summer months, and the machines always seemed popular. Michael was unable to continue running the arcade, due I believe, to a dispute with the landlord. Sadly, Herne Bay was to be his last arcade, and Michael retired.

With such a long and illustrious operating pedigree, Michael's knowledge was second to none, both in memory and the immense collection of paperwork he had from his family's operating days. Michael could lay his hands on anything from sales invoices to trade literature and certainly helped me on several occasions with research for the magazine. There was very little he didn't know about any machine, and he always had parts or knew where to get them. Michael has taken with him so much knowledge and information, which is now sadly gone forever.

I last saw Michael just a few months ago, when he called in at my house on his way back to Margate, and dropped in some old pennies for me. I had no idea he was in poor health, and today's news has certainly come as a shock. It was always a pleasure to meet Michael, and over the years I have had many interesting conversations and learnt much from him. You may remember it was he who recently identified Rollite Products as the maker of **Moonraker** (Feb. issue).

Whilst I wish now that I had pressed him for more information when I had the opportunity, I am glad that I knew him and am grateful for what knowledge he did pass on. Sadly, another piece of coin-op history has gone to the great arcade in the sky.

With fond memories

Jerry



Burrows sales advertisement from the 1930s

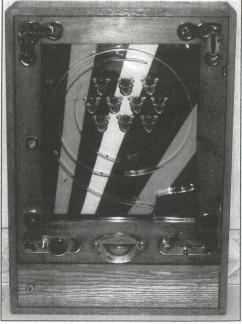
Stolen Machines

Last month, I mentioned briefly a collector who had been burgled, and amongst other personal possessions, a number of machines had been taken. That collector is Richard Goddard. Unfortunately, I learnt of the incident only a day or two before the magazine went to print, so was unable to publish any information at that time.

A total of five machines were stolen, and I sincerely hope that publishing details in this magazine will help in their identification wherever they surface. At this point, I should remind you all that they are stolen goods, and if you are offered one, or see them advertised, or on sale anywhere, you should contact the police, and also Richard (via myself). I'm sure we would all like to see Richard eventually reunited with his machines.

So, let's start with the two easiest. These are easy because they are a Bryans Gapwin and a Ten Cup, and as we all know, Bryans machines are serialised. Remarkably, Richard had the good sense to record the serial numbers (see below). Both operate on old penny play and are in very nice condition. One distinctive feature on the Ten Cup machine is that the backflash has slightly moved which has affected the extreme right hand cup top row, whereby the ball sits on the cup instead of entering it.





Bryans Gapwin, Serial No. 2629

Bryans Ten Cup, Serial No. 4208

Next, is an Allwin De Luxe, a picture of which has previously been published in the magazine as part of Richard's series of articles on photographing slot machines. There are two distinctive features, which possibly make this machine unique. First, the top does not have the usual overhang and routing, which suggests it may have been cut down at some time in the past. Second, the relief on the pediment is not as deep as one would normally expect. In addition, the number 521 has been painted in blue at the top of the backboard, although this, of course, can only be viewed from inside.





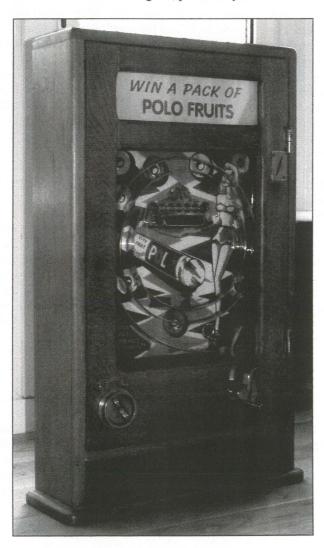
Allwin De Luxe, and below, the number 521 on the backboard.

The forth machine is a Clown Catcher, which is the most difficult to give an identifiable description. The sides are stamped with the letters PMWG and XX in a box, although this should not be regarded as unique, as my own Clown has exactly the same marks. Unfortunately, whereas my machine has a serial number stamped on the top, Richard's does not. What probably is unique though, is a small plate below the lock stamped with the number 783, but as Richard points out, this could easily be removed. There is evidence that another small plate has previously been fitted below this, with two screw holes that have been filled. There is also some case damage adjacent to the lock, where the door has been forced at some time in the past. The coin entry is mazak, rather than brass, but again, this is not uncommon.



Clown Catcher. Note the damage to the case where the door has been forced open, the small plate below the lock and the area below where another plate was once screwed.

The final machine is Win a Fruit Polo allwin, and is not one that I have ever encountered. It is not a Whales or Parkers, neither does it appear to be one of the many machines distributed by Ruffler & Walker or Kraft. The top flash looks like it may not be original, but take particular note that it is part of the door rather than the case. Perhaps the most identifiable feature is that at some point in the past the machine was painted white, and there is clear evidence of this in the wood grain, particularly on the inside of the case.



Win a Pack of Fruit Polos.

Note that the top flash is rather bland compared to the very distinctive backflash.

Whilst I hope these notes will help identify Richard's machines when they surface, this is perhaps a good time to consider how we can record identifiable features on our own machines. If any of us were to have one or more machines stolen, could we give an accurate description? It's no use saying to the police "I'd know it if I saw it." Having given the matter some thought, I was rather shocked at the realisation that I would not be able to cite any distinguishing features on any of my machines. Without doubt, the best form of identification is a serial number, but although some of my machines do have serial numbers, I've never recorded them............and I'm sure I'm not alone, am I?

So here are a few tips, which I hope will be helpful. As I stated earlier, all Bryans machines are serialised, so if you own Bryans machines, make a note of the numbers. Next, one-armed bandits. Most bandits have serial numbers, but recording the numbers may not be so straightforward. Serial numbers are usually stamped on the mech. and on the case (somewhere, depending on the maker). However, it is not uncommon to find that the mech. and case number do not match, as operators would often swap mechs., put them in the wrong cases etc. In the case of Mills and Sega bandits, from the Hi-Top range onward, it is not uncommon to find a Sega mech. in a Mills case, and vice versa. So, make sure you record case and mech. numbers where they differ.

Now wall machines. As we all know, very few British wall machines were serialised, so I strongly recommend you mark each machine with a unique number, say three or four digits. You may want to do this by painting large numbers in white paint on the outside of the case (but probably not)! I suggest marking the inside of the case, perhaps on both sides, and you might consider branding the numbers with a soldering iron rather than paint, so that they are less easily removed. I also suggest doing the same on the inside of the door. The basic message is: whatever the machine, whether it be wall mounted, counter-top or free standing, ensure it has a distinguishing number that cannot be easily removed.

It is worth considering what we can do to prevent a machine from being stolen in the first place. Apart from the obvious aspects of general house security, ask yourself how easy it would be to remove any of your machines. A chance burglar is unlikely to go to any great lengths to remove a cast iron mutoscope, but a wall machine standing on the floor might seem an easier proposition. Unfortunately, Richard's machines were stolen because they were easy to remove, but Richard is not alone. I know many collectors whose machines simply stand on the floor (and that includes myself). If it is practical, screw wall machines to the wall and fix counter-top machines to whatever they stand on. And at the risk of stating the obvious, keep keys somewhere safe, away from the machines.

One final point: make sure your machines are insured. Some household policies may not cover 'specialist items' such as old slot machines. We all know that insurance companies are thieving, dishonest, unethical, rotten b*****rds, and if they can wriggle out of anything, they will. So check that your policy does actually cover your machines.

Let's All Take Heed

By Johnny Burley

On reading Jerry's comments on his first page editorial in the April issue of MMM, I think all of us should be concerned and take heed of the warnings within it. Any monthly magazine of its kind (and let's remember it is unique in being the only one published in the UK) needs its subscribers to survive. It also requires input from those subscribers, e.g. articles, old flyers and advertising or anything of interest concerning the beloved machines we collect. OK, yes we can all wheel and deal on ebay and other sources, but the Mechanical Memories Magazine is what links us all together with our hobby, along of course with the great (and much looked forward to) yearly auctions. Once that link is broken, interest begins to die.

So let's get behind Jerry in his efforts to keep our exciting interest in collecting these wonderful old relics from a bygone age alive and kicking. I'm sure many collectors out there have stories and much information that we can all share through the pages of MMM. So come on all, get those overdue subs paid, and send in anything of interest regarding vintage coin-operated amusements.

Editor's reply

Many thanks for your comments and observations Johnny; you, along with many others can always be relied upon to support the magazine. Unfortunately, subscribing to the magazine is not compulsory. It's a free country (well, used to be), and everyone is free to make their own choices. But as I stated last month, I cannot continue to work for next to nothing, so the future of the magazine is in the hands of subscribers. I can only reiterate – This is YOUR magazine. Support it or loose it.

Playing the Slots Part 1

By Robert Rowland

Each month I will feature old slot machines in my collection, that gave much enjoyment to me here in the local amusement arcades in Mablethorpe in the 1960s. The first machine to be remembered is called **Tuck Shop** and was made by Shields, of Bridlington.

Today, we enter one of the largest arcades, and very popular at the time, called Marine Pastimes. We walk in and straight ahead on the back wall I can see five Tuck Shops, all lined up side by side. The game idea is insert penny in slide and push in, which delivers a large steel ball bearing. Fire the ball with the plunger onto the playdeck. As the ball makes contact with the sides or bumpers, each touch moves the traffic lights on the top flash times one: red, amber, green, amber, red etc. When the ball finishes, if the traffic lights are on green you win a packet of Polos.

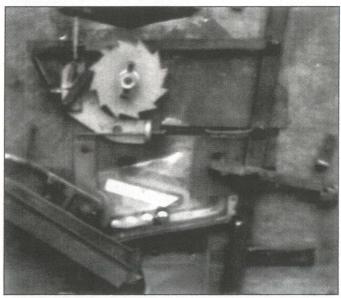
OK, let's have a go. Penny in, ball fired onto playdeck – amber, green, amber, red, amber......go on, one more bounce......green, yes! Chung! A pack of Polos comes rolling down the glass, wonderful! That sound is unforgettable, as the sweets come rolling down the glass towards you. A penny well invested I think, also a lot of fun to play and a great thrill at the time. I will now have a walk round and maybe return later in the day, when I have eaten these. How many of these Tuck Shops survived? I don't know, but going on the size of them, I would suggest very few. Oh well, onto the next arcade.

We will now move onto one of the smaller arcades in Mablethorpe High Street. The place is called Queens Arcade and is run by the son and his elderly father. Music of the time was always playing in this particular arcade

As I walk in, I recognise the tune, it's the latest one from the Beatles. I make my way to the top end of the small arcade, and on the right-hand wall at the bottom we have a row of six allwins. The second one on the left interests me, it's a Kraft **Extrawin**. A very clever little machine, in the middle of the backflash is a rotor feature, which moves one turn with every win. The six winning cups along the top each pay 2d. If on a win, a ball drops down a hole at the top of the rotor, then a win can pay 4d or 6d.

I always hang around this machine, waiting for the two balls together in the rotor feature to drop on the next 2d win (making the win 6d). As we speak, the rotor is in that position right now (see pic). Penny in, ball appears, flick – ahh, too much on it, straight down into the lost hole. Another go, flick – unlucky, the ball entered the win area but hit the pins and dropped down into the lost. Let's try again. Penny in, flick......yes, gone in the win. Turn once for the initial 2d, as it pays out, the first of the two balls in the rotor drops, then the second one drops, making three turns at 2d a turn. I just won 6d. Not worth playing now, because if I land the ball in a winning cup, it will only be a 2d win. We will return at a later time to see if the rotor feature has done a full circle and would be worth playing. That was fun. Time to move onto the next arcade.......





Top, Extrawin playfield, showing the rotor below the win gallery.

Bottom, the ratchet wheel at the rear of the playfield,
which advances the rotor each time the payout knob is turned.
Front cover picture, Tuck Shop.

Robert will continue his trip down memory lane next month

Restoration dips



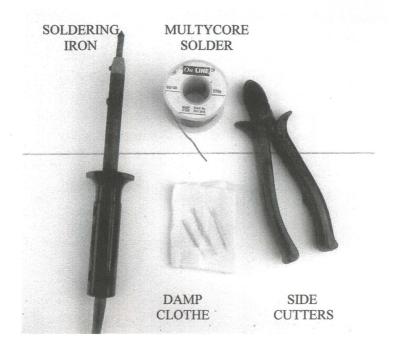
By Stuart Dale

Tidying up electromechanical wiring - Part One

This month I thought I would have a look at some of the basic methods of repairing and tidying up the wiring on your electromechanical machines. Some of you will have machines that have been 'repaired' by someone in the past, you know the sort of thing I mean: bad joints covered in insulating tape; stray wires hanging loose; screw terminal blocks etc. We have all seen it, but not sure where to start. I hope this article will inspire you to have a go.

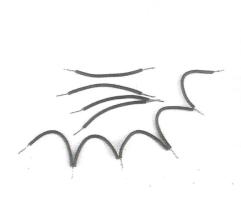
SOLDERING.

Inside your electromechanical machine you will find lots of relays, motors, lights & switches all of which are interconnected by wires to form a circuit. Each connection in the circuit has to have a clean soldered joint for it to work correctly. To make a good soldered joint, you will need a soldering iron. They come in many sizes, but I find that an iron with a power rating of about 30watts will give you enough heat for most jobs. You will also need some solder and a pair of side cutters. The solder should be 60% lead & 40% tin with a rosin/flux core and comes in the form of soft wire on small spools, this is known as multycore solder. It is a good idea to have a damp sponge or rag on hand to wipe the tip of the iron between joints so as to keep it clean.

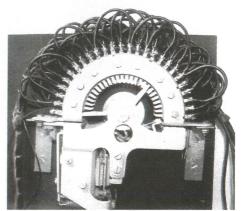


Cleaning is also very important when preparing a joint prior to soldering. To produce a perfect joint, both half's must be dry, clean and free from oxidation and grease. Solder will not take to a dirty surface. The soldering iron tip and each half of the joint must be 'tinned' before soldering them together. Tinning is separately coating each wire or component with solder. To do this you must hold the tip of the hot soldering iron against the wire or component for a few seconds to heat it up, and then apply the multycore solder to the wire or component not the iron. The solder should flow evenly over the surface of the wire or component, once both half's have been tinned, the two parts can be brought together and reheated with the tip of the iron. The solder on both half's of the joint should flow together producing a perfect joint, extra solder can be added at this point if required. Let the joint cool down for a few seconds without letting it move, now wipe the tip of the iron on a damp cloth to keep it clean. If you find that you have to solder two or more wires to a single terminal or component it is a good

idea to make a sub assembly from the wires first. One example of this are the link wires on a uniselector switch where you could have 50+ joints all within a few square inches. I find that if you first cut all the required link wires to length and then strip back and tin both ends of each wire you can then twist the ends of two adjoining wires together and reheat the tinning to form a stable soldered joint, you may have to use a pair of pliers to aid the twisting together. Depending on what size of wire you are working with, you can assemble as many links as you need prior to soldering them to the uniselector.







Uniselector link wires

Next month, I shall discuss making a cable harness, in the meantime – Have Fun!

HEALTH & SAFETY

First a word on Electrical Safety. It is very important that you NEVER, that's NEVER work on live equipment; always disconnect/unplug it from the mains supply first. Always ware safety glasses and work in a well ventilated area when soldering.



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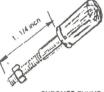
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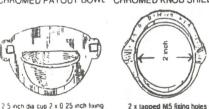
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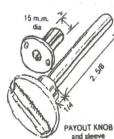
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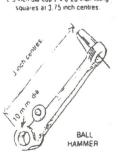
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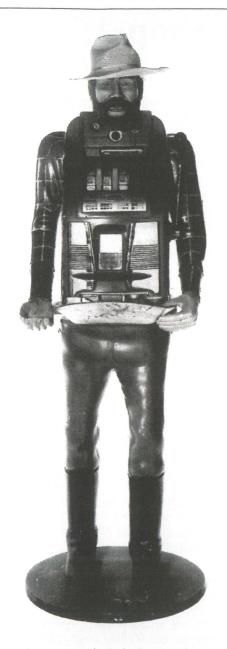
SPANDRELLS







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A Delong Cowboy one-armed Bandit, Circa 1960, with Mills 'Bell-O-Matic' three-reel machine on 6d. play.

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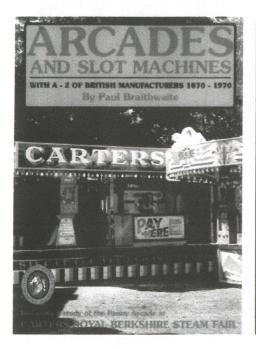
This volume captures Watling Manufacturing Company's full range from scales to bandits in catalogues, brochures, line folders, broadsides and service data, original patent and mock-up photos of the ROL-A-TOR line, artists' preparatory airbrush renderings for advertising and promotional material and Watling family photos and correspondence. Plenty of legendary anecdotes and well-informed context in the accompanying commentary. Hardback, 192 pages, b/w. **Price: £15**

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